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SUBJECT: Media Reaction: Middle East; Dhaka

Summary: Various newspapers comment that Israel continues to enjoy the unqualified friendship of the United States. The United States' reaction to North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons is discriminatory to Muslims.

Middle East

"Fight Against Jihadis And Crusaders Alike Is The Need Of The Hour"

Independent English daily "New Age" op-ed opines (03/16/05): Just look at the present global scenario. The Bush administration's primary foreign policy goal in its second term seems to be 'regime change' in Syria, as follow-up to the regime change in Iraq. Bush's 'axis of evil', referred to in the infamous speech delivered in 2000, did not include Syria, but in his latest state of the union address Bush named the country, alongside Iran, hinting clearly that Syria's 'rise up the bad guys' league table' (sic). Because Washington's prime objective in the Middle East region is to secure Israel's political and strategic interests, which was evident in a US-sponsored study - A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm - eventually published by Tel Aviv's Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies in 1996, that said, 'Israel can shape its strategic environment, in cooperation with Turkey and Jordan, by weakening, containing, and even rolling back Syria.' This is the report that provided Washington with the guideline for enacting the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act just over a year ago, under which the Bush administration imposed economic sanctions on Syria in May, 2004, and compelled it to begin pulling out from Lebanon since last week.

Again, it is the United State's official policies towards Muslims that allows people like Daniel Pipes to even create and run so-called think tanks to perpetually malign the Muslims. Pipes heads a private sector think-tank called Middle East Forum (MEF), which is a fierce opponent of Palestinian nationalism. He has recently proposed the creation of an Anti-Islamist Institute (AII), designed to expose 'legal' political activities of the Islamists, such as 'prohibiting families from sending pork or pork by-products to U.S. soldiers serving in Iraq', which, he believes, 'serves the interests of radical Islam'. 'In the legal term...the legal activities of Islamists pose as much or even a greater set of challenges than the illegal ones,' Pipes reportedly argued recently in a proposal for a grant for the MEF. The AII's proclaimed goal is the 'delegitimation of the Islamists'. 'We wish to have them shunned by the government, the media, the churches, the academy and the corporate world.'

Israel continues to enjoy the unqualified friendship of the United States. 'Israel's expansion has included ethnic cleansing. Palestinians who had lived in that land for centuries were driven out by systematic violence and terror aimed at ethnically cleansing what became a large part of the Israeli state. The methods of groups like Irgun and the Stern gang were the same as those of the Bosnian Serb Karadzic: to drive out people by terror,' writes Ken Livingstone, mayor of London, for the UK-based Guardian on March 5. 'Today the Israeli government continues seizures of Palestinian land for settlements, military incursions into surrounding countries and denial of the right of Palestinians expelled by terror to return. Ariel Sharon, Israel's prime minister, is a war criminal who should be in prison, not in office.'

However, the fundamentalist discrimination against the Muslims becomes further evident if one looks at Washington's attitude towards a non-Muslim country, North Korea that already possesses nuclear bombs. The political establishment in Pyongyang announced on February 10 that it has nuclear weapons and unilaterally suspended the disarmament discussion with the China-led four-nation negotiation team that includes Japan, Russia and South Korea. But the United State's reaction is that they need to 'engage in vigorous

diplomatic efforts' to coax North Korea back to the bargaining table. North Korea also announced in September Syria, but in his latest state of the union address Bush named the country, alongside Iran, hinting clearly that Syria's 'rise up the bad guys' league table' (sic). Because Washington's prime objective in the Middle East region is to secure Israel's political and strategic interests, which was evident in a US-sponsored study - A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm - eventually published by Tel Aviv's Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies in 1996, that said, 'Israel can shape its strategic environment, in cooperation with Turkey and Jordan, by weakening, containing, and even rolling back Syria.' This is the report that provided Washington with the guideline for enacting the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act just over a year ago, under which the Bush administration imposed economic sanctions on Syria in May, 2004, and compelled it to begin pulling out from Lebanon since last week.

2004, and that too at the United Nations, that it had 'transformed material for nuclear weapons into arms'. The US's reported reaction, at that time, was that it was a 'regional issue', which 'should be dealt with by North Korea's neighbors'.

"A Banner of Peace"

Independent English daily "New Age" editorial comments (0316/05):

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan has vowed that the peace process in the Middle East will go ahead. He was obviously going through pangs of enthusiasm after a meeting with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah on March 14. There is little question that since the death of Yasser Arafat and the rise of Abbas to the presidency of the Palestinian Authority, things have really been moving in the region. Mr. Abbas has been the recipient of honors in such important places as the United States and Britain. It is clear that men of the likes of George W. Bush are quite willing to engage with him in negotiations over the future of the Palestinians. And he has already had meetings with the hawkish Ariel Sharon over the future of the region. It is all the cumulative result of all these happenings that may now have prompted Mr. Annan into expressing his optimism about the future of the most volatile part of the planet.

But there is a new difficulty which neither Mr. Annan nor anyone else may have foreseen earlier. Even as he was into his meeting with Mahmoud Abbas, the Israeli authorities made a new announcement about the barrier they have already constructed to keep Palestinian suicide bombers out of Israel and parts of the Arab land it has kept occupied. They have now said that there will be a new extension to the barrier that will effectively shut the Palestinians off from East Jerusalem. That is quite a blow to the tentative momentum, which has come to the peace process in recent weeks. And given the fact that a key demand of the Palestinians has always been the establishment of their capital in East Jerusalem if and when a sovereign Palestine actually takes shape, the new round of fencing can only add to the complications. It will not be the Palestinians who can or will be blamed. The burden will fall squarely on the shoulders of the Israelis, who have kept adhering to the curious thought that the barrier will be enough to deter the young men determined to carry out their murderous acts Syria, but in his latest state of the union address Bush named the country, alongside Iran, hinting clearly that Syria's 'rise up the bad guys' league table' (sic). Because Washington's prime objective in the Middle East region is to secure Israel's political and strategic interests, which was evident in a US-sponsored study - A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm - eventually published by Tel Aviv's Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies in 1996, that said, 'Israel can shape its strategic environment, in cooperation with Turkey and Jordan, by weakening, containing, and even rolling back Syria.' This is the report that provided Washington with the guideline for enacting the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act just over a year ago, under which the Bush administration imposed economic sanctions on Syria in May, 2004, and compelled it to begin pulling out from Lebanon since last week.

against Israeli citizens. As the politically astute Hanan Ashrawi has pointed out, even the barrier has proved insufficient in the matter of stopping Palestinians from carrying out suicide bombings. Besides, there are very good reasons why Israel and its friends, particularly the United States, must now seriously go into the causes of the current troubles. What is important today is not that some kind of Palestinian entity will be forged from the territories Israel plans to give up. The important thing is that the UN Security Council resolutions, especially 242, asking for a full and complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Arab lands occupied in June 1967 be implemented all the way.

Besides, it will serve little purpose, indeed it may give rise to new deadlock if the right of Palestinians to return to the homes that are now in the state of Israel is not granted. An exodus in times of war cannot be an excuse for anyone to lay claim to the property of those who have left out of fear.

It will be up to Mr. Abbas to devise the means by which he can wring concessions out of the Israelis. As for the Israelis, their deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has suggested that the barrier will come down once terrorism comes to an end. That is a fuzzy statement. It does not do anyone any good. It will only disappoint people such as Kofi Annan.

"American Conspiracy to Attack Iran By Israel"

Large circulation independent Bangla language daily
"Jugantor" op-ed article says (03/16/05):

On what basis Israel will launch an attack on Iran should Iran possess nuclear weapons? Is it due to the fact the Israel is the main weapon of American terrorism in the Middle East and its main executioner in the region? Israel does not possess that much of power without the American support through which Israel can threaten each Middle East country and attack them.

President Bush terms every country as terrorists in his speeches and literally wails to free the world from terrorism. That is why he has been launching military attacks on various countries. But why will he not prevent Israel from attacking Iran? Will not the Israeli attack be an act of terrorism? Will not it be the most naked example Syria, but in his latest state of the union address Bush named the country, alongside Iran, hinting clearly that Syria's 'rise up the bad guys' league table' (sic). Because Washington's prime objective in the Middle East region is to secure Israel's political and strategic interests, which was evident in a US-sponsored study - A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm - eventually published by Tel Aviv's Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies in 1996, that said, 'Israel can shape its strategic environment, in cooperation with Turkey and Jordan, by weakening, containing, and even rolling back Syria.' This is the report that provided Washington with the guideline for enacting the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act just over a year ago, under which the Bush administration imposed economic sanctions on Syria in May, 2004, and compelled it to begin pulling out from Lebanon since last week.

of state terrorism? Of course it is. But it makes little difference to Mr. Bush. He occupied Afghanistan and Iraq on false pretexts. The United States is now mad to exert its control over the entire Middle East. It is the Americans' most important condition to retain its supremacy as the number one imperialist country. The preparation to attack Iran is part of that condition to maintain its supremacy.

Thomas